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Advancement of women

Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 68/138 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventieth session a report on the status of the Convention and the implementation of the resolution. It covers the period from 2 July 2013 to 1 July 2015.

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I. Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180. It was opened for signature, subject to ratification and for accession at United Nations Headquarters on 1 March 1980 and, in accordance with article 27 of the Convention, entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. As at 1 July 2015, 189 States had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Convention. This represents an increase of two States parties since the submission of the previous report (A/68/121). These two States parties were: State of Palestine, on 2 April 2014; and South Sudan, on 30 April 2015. The list of States parties to the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession or succession to the Convention are available from the website of the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs (http://treaties.un.org), along with all declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information.

3. As at 1 July 2015, 69 States parties had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which relates to the meeting time of the Committee. The State party having accepted the amendment since the submission of the previous report is Serbia. The list of States that have accepted the amendment to article 20 of the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of acceptance are available on the website of the Treaty Section.

4. During the reporting period, no objections to reservations were received; and Austria withdrew its reservation to article 11 (C.N.336.2015); France withdrew its reservations to articles 14 (2) (c) and (h) and 16 (1) (g) (C.N.835.2013); Iraq withdrew its reservation to article 9 (C.N.82.2014); Mauritania withdrew its general reservation but maintained it with regard to articles 13 (a) and 16 (C.N.505.2014); Switzerland withdrew its reservation to article 16 (1) (g) (C.N.902.2013); and Tunisia withdrew its declaration with regard to article 15 (4) as well as its reservations to articles 9 (2), 16 (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h) and 29 (1) (C.N.220.2014). The above depositary notifications are available from the website of the Office of Legal Affairs for reference.

II. Status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

5. By its resolution 54/4, the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Optional Protocol was opened for signature, subject to ratification and accession at United Nations Headquarters on 10 December 1999 and, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 1, entered into force on 22 December 2000.

6. As at 1 July 2015, 106 States parties had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Optional Protocol. This represents an increase in two States parties since the submission of the previous report. These two States parties were: Tajikistan, on 22 July 2014; and South Sudan, on 30 April 2015. The list of States parties to the Optional Protocol, the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession

or succession, and all declarations, reservations and other relevant information are also available from the website of the Treaty Section.

III. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

A. Substantive and technical servicing

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has responsibility for supporting the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee is serviced by the secretariat of the Committee, which comprises the Secretary (P-4), four Human Rights Officers (P-3), one Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and one Assistant (General Service).

8. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has ensured that the strong links between the Committee and the intergovernmental machinery responsible for the promotion of gender equality continue to be maintained. The previous and current Chairs of the Committee participated in the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, respectively, in 2014 and 2015. The then Chair also addressed the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions. The Committee's interaction with the United Nations human rights machinery is extremely important for its overall activities, and the Committee benefits greatly from the cooperation of the relevant stakeholders to effectively discharge its mandate.

9. The Committee regularly discusses issues of common concern with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The Chair of the Committee met with the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women on 11 March 2014 to express support for a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda and raise the need to focus on the implementation of the Convention, including the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations. The Committee is currently collaborating with UN-Women on several of its draft general recommendations, and UN-Women regularly invites experts from the Committee to participate in expert group meetings and side events convened in conjunction with intergovernmental processes.

10. The Committee has continued to interact with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Deputy High Commissioner and other senior staff, and has welcomed opportunities for discussion with relevant divisions, branches and sections on issues relevant to the work of the Committee.

11. The Committee meets regularly with special procedures mandate holders, including, during the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants.

12. On 6 November 2014, the Committee held an informal meeting with the States parties to the Convention, which was attended by 65 States parties. The Committee briefed the States parties on the implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocol in the context of the outcome of the treaty body strengthening process.

Several States parties welcomed the adoption by the Committee of a simplified reporting procedure. Several States parties expressed the wish to avail themselves of the procedure for the submission of their periodic reports. Among the other issues discussed were the integration of women's rights into the post-2015 development agenda and the Committee's work on violence against women.

13. The Committee continued to contribute actively to the work of the human rights treaty bodies, especially within the framework of the annual meetings of Chairs of treaty bodies. The Chair participated in the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh meetings of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, which were convened from 23 to 27 June 2014 and from 22 to 26 June 2015 in Geneva and San José, respectively. During the twenty-sixth meeting, the Chair of the Committee participated in a discussion on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, as well as on follow-up to the recommendations of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Chairs, including the application by treaty bodies of the simplified reporting procedure, the alignment of the methodology for the constructive dialogue with States parties and a common format for short, focused and concrete concluding observations. The Chair also participated in informal consultations with States parties regarding General Assembly resolution 68/268, civil society organizations and the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions, and in meetings with representatives of the Special Procedures Branch and the Universal Periodic Review Section of OHCHR to discuss complementarities with the work of those mechanisms. During the twenty-seventh meeting of the Chairs, the Chair of the Committee participated in the adoption of a joint treaty body policy against reprisals and in consultations with States parties, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, United Nations entities and specialized agencies, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations from the region.

14. Committee members participated in panel discussions held during sessions of the Human Rights Council, and one member participated in a day of general discussion of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Committee members also participated in various panel discussions organized by other stakeholders.

15. During the reporting period, the Committee held two general discussions, one on rural women, on 7 October 2013, and the other on girls' and women's right to education, on 7 July 2014. Both general discussions were organized as the first phase in the elaboration of general recommendations. The general discussion on rural women, co-organized by OHCHR, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development and UN-Women, was attended by a large number of States parties, United Nations entities and specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations. It included as speakers the Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships and Governance, WFP; a member of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation; the Co-Executive Director of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and a representative of Kenyan grass-roots organizations. The general discussion on girls' and women's right to education,

organized by OHCHR with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was also attended by a large number of States parties and non-governmental organizations. It included as speakers the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of the Independent States, UNICEF; the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador to Ethiopia; the Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in Geneva; the Chief of the Section for Basic Education, UNESCO; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the education adviser for Plan International and previous Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the Executive Director of the Protection Project, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; a member of the Network of Advisers of the Right to Education Project; and a former teacher of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Malala Yousafzai.

16. With a view to further enhancing and harmonizing its working methods with other treaty bodies, and in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268 on treaty body strengthening, the Committee decided to offer, on a pilot basis, the simplified reporting procedure to those States parties that wish to avail themselves of this procedure for the submission of their overdue periodic reports as from 1 January 2015, provided that the States parties concerned have submitted an updated common core document, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (HRI/MC/2006/3 and Corr.1), which dates back no more than five years.[1] The Committee also adopted a guidance note for States parties on the constructive dialogue with the human rights treaty bodies and a common framework for concluding observations, as recommended by the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies at their twenty-sixth meeting, held in Geneva from 23 to 27 June 2014 (see A/69/285, annexes I and II). It decided to review its rules of procedure, with a view to implementing General Assembly resolution 68/268 and integrating new provisions operationalizing the guidelines on independence and impartiality of human rights treaty body members endorsed at the twenty-fourth meeting of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, held in Addis Ababa in June 2012 ("the Addis Ababa guidelines"; see A/67/222, annex I).

B. Evaluation by the Committee

17. As at 1 July 2015, there are 17 States parties with long-overdue reports (more than 5 years overdue). Three of the States parties that have not yet submitted their long-overdue reports, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Saint Kitts and Nevis, have been listed to be considered by the Committee in the absence of their reports. The Committee also continues to send reminders to States parties with overdue reports. In the light of the additional meeting time allocated to the Committee under General Assembly resolution 68/268, it now schedules the reports of 28 States parties for review per year and has scheduled 35 States parties to be considered at

[1] The Committee decided that the following States parties having requested to submit their periodic reports under the simplified reporting procedure and meeting the eligibility criteria stipulated in decisions 58/II and 59/IV would be considered under that procedure: Belarus (eighth periodic report), Ireland (combined sixth to eighth periodic reports), Israel (sixth periodic report), Luxembourg (combined sixth and seventh periodic reports) and Romania (combined seventh to ninth periodic reports) (see A/70/38, part three, chap. I, decision 60/IX).

its sixty-first session (July 2015), sixty-second session (October/November 2015), sixty-third session (February/March 2016) and sixty-fourth session (July 2016). Fifteen reports have not yet been formally scheduled. The Committee is aware that it has a slight backlog and considers that the consideration of combined reports assists greatly in keeping the backlog in check. Most reports submitted consist of combined reports.

18. The Committee is gratified that it continues to attract a wide following within the United Nations system and civil society, including national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations, and that it has been able to interact with the wider human rights framework, including the Human Rights Council, the special procedures mandate holders and other treaty bodies. Its transfer to OHCHR and the holding of its sessions in Geneva have enabled the Committee to interact regularly with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to develop close relationships with Geneva-based United Nations entities and other bodies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

19. The Committee considers that it has continued to make strong efforts to harmonize its practices with those of other treaty bodies. It also considers that its follow-up procedure, which is similar to that of other treaty bodies, has strengthened implementation at the national level.

Fulfilment by States parties of reporting obligations

20. Article 18, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that States parties undertake to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention within one year after its entry into force for the State concerned and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

21. Between 2 July 2013 and 1 July 2015, the Secretary-General received the reports (many of which are combined reports) from the following States parties: Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, France, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Yemen.

22. During the reporting period, the Committee held the following six sessions: fifty-fifth session, from 8 to 26 July 2013; fifty-sixth session, from 30 September to 18 October 2013; fifty-seventh session, from 10 to 28 February 2014; fifty-eighth session, from 30 June to 18 July 2014; fifty-ninth session, from 20 October to 7 November 2014; and sixtieth session, from 16 February to 6 March 2015. During those sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 46 States parties. The sixty-first session will be held from 6 to 24 July 2015, at which an additional eight reports will be considered by the Committee.

Reports awaiting consideration, overdue reports and requests for follow-up reports

23. A total of 50 reports submitted by States parties have yet to be considered by the Committee, 35 of which have been scheduled to be considered at upcoming sessions of the Committee through the end of July 2016. Fifteen reports received have not yet been formally scheduled.

24. In the light of the reduced backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the Committee initiated a systematic effort to encourage States parties to submit long-overdue reports. On the basis of its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), it established that it would proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report only as a last resort and in the presence of a delegation. The Committee continued its practice of inviting States parties with long-overdue reports to submit all their overdue reports as a combined report.

25. Currently, the following States parties have not yet submitted their initial reports: Dominica, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Nauru, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and State of Palestine.

26. Reports that were due in June 2010 or before include: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominica, Ireland, Kiribati, Latvia, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mozambique, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe and Suriname.

27. Reports that were due between July 2010 and June 2015 include those for: Australia, Belarus, Belize, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cook Islands, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Israel, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Nauru, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, State of Palestine, Tunisia, Uganda and Ukraine.

C. Working methods of the Committee

28. Taking into account the word limits for treaty body documentation established in General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee's report to the Assembly no longer includes the concluding observations on the reports of States parties, the decisions on communications or general recommendations of the Committee; those are published as separate documents and are posted on the OHCHR website.

29. The Committee has continued to convene its pre-session working group two sessions in advance of the consideration of a report to ensure that States parties have enough time to respond to their respective lists of issues and questions.

30. The Committee, in the last paragraph of its concluding observations, establishes the due date for the State party's next periodic report. In cases where the next periodic report is overdue or becomes due within one or two years of the date of consideration, the Committee requests the State party to submit its next report as a combined periodic report. Most reports considered by the Committee are now combined reports.

31. During the reporting period, the Committee focused on ensuring that the concluding observations on the reports of States parties were more targeted,

country-specific and precise, so that they could be implemented more effectively at the national level. It should be recalled that at its forty-first session, the Committee decided to adopt the practice of inserting titles (subject headings) in its concluding observations, and agreed on a list of titles which would be applied flexibly and as appropriate for the State party concerned (A/63/38, part two, annex X). At its fifty-fourth and fifty-sixth sessions, the Committee decided to shorten and merge several standard paragraphs contained in its concluding observations.

32. At its forty-first session, the Committee decided to introduce a follow-up procedure whereby it would include a request to individual States parties in the concluding observations for information on steps taken to implement specific recommendations. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided to appoint a rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and an alternate. It is noted that a maximum of two recommendations are identified for follow-up. The criteria for the selection of follow-up recommendations are that the concerns addressed in those recommendations constitute a major obstacle to women's enjoyment of their rights and thus to the implementation of the Convention as a whole and that their implementation would be feasible within the suggested time frame. The follow-up report is also made public and is available on the website of OHCHR. The follow-up rapporteur collaborates with the country rapporteur on the assessment of the follow-up report. The rapporteur reports to the Committee at each session, and that report is included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. At its forty-seventh session, the Committee decided to include follow-up to concluding observations as a standing item on the agenda. At its fiftieth session, the Committee appointed a new rapporteur on follow-up as well as an alternate, each for a two-year term. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee updated its methodology on the follow-up procedure to concluding observations and adopted an information note on the follow-up procedure for different stakeholders (see A/68/38, part three, annex III and appendix). At its fifty-sixth session, the Committee extended the term of the rapporteur on follow-up and appointed a new alternate, both for the period of one year. It also assessed its follow-up procedure and concluded that the procedure had proved to be an effective tool of implementation of the Convention, enabling the Committee to monitor progress achieved between reporting cycles. It decided that the follow-up procedure should continue and that another assessment should be made in October 2016 (see A/69/38, part two, annex VI). At its sixty-ninth session, the Committee appointed a new rapporteur on follow-up as well as an alternate, each for a two-year term.

33. The Committee continued its interaction with the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system that contribute to its work and support the full implementation of the Convention at the national level. It continued to benefit from joint information submitted on States parties under consideration by United Nations country teams, and encouraged the entities of the United Nations system to undertake follow-up activities on the basis of the Committee's concluding observations at the country level.

34. The Committee continued its practice of meeting informally with non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions wishing to present country-specific information on States parties whose reports were before it, at the beginning of the first and second weeks of the session. The Committee's pre-session working group also provided opportunities for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions to present written and oral

information. General and session-specific information notes for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions are regularly posted on the OHCHR website.

35. The Committee continued to emphasize the important role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention and the follow-up to concluding observations and includes a standard paragraph on the role of parliaments in each observation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union regularly submits information on the representation of women in the parliaments of the States parties under consideration and organizes regular capacity-building sessions for parliamentarians on the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

36. The Committee continued its practice of adopting statements on particular events or developments. Those include statements on the role of women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia and on strengthened cooperation with UN-Women, adopted at its fifty-fifth session (A/69/38, part one, annexes I and II, respectively); statements on the post-2015 development agenda and the elimination of discrimination against women and on sexual and reproductive health and rights: beyond the 2014 review of the International Conference on Population and Development, adopted at its fifty-seventh session (A/69/38, part three, annexes I and II, respectively); a statement on the situation of women in Gaza and an open letter to the co-chairs of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, adopted at its fifty-eighth session (available from the OHCHR website); and an open letter to Radhika Coomaraswamy, the lead author for the global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, adopted at its sixtieth session (available from the OHCHR website).

37. The Committee adopted at its fifty-sixth session a general recommendation on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30). At its fifty-ninth session, it adopted a joint general recommendation/general comment of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices (CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18) and a general recommendation on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women (CEDAW/C/GC/32). The general recommendation on access to justice is in the process of being finalized. With respect to the general recommendation on rural women, a first draft has been prepared and shared with external stakeholders for comments. In relation to the general recommendation on girls' and women's right to education, a first draft is currently being prepared. The Committee also decided to hold a half-day general discussion on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change, during its sixty-third session, with a view to elaborating a general recommendation on the topic (see A/70/38, part three, decision 60/X).

D. Working methods with regard to the Optional Protocol

38. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to carry out its activities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee normally allocates two meetings per session to matters relating to the Optional Protocol for consideration in plenary meeting.

39. The Committee's Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol held six sessions during the reporting period. The Working Group on Communications convenes three times a year for a total of 10 working days. To date, the Working Group has registered 87 communications, 33 of which were registered during the reporting period. Of the 87 communications, 39 remain open.

40. During the reporting period, the Committee adopted final decisions with regard to 15 communications. At its fifty-fifth session, held in July 2013, the Committee discontinued its consideration of one communication concerning Denmark and declared communications Nos. 33/2011, 35/2011 and 40/2012 inadmissible. At its fifty-sixth session, held in September/October 2013, the Committee discontinued its consideration of one communication concerning the Netherlands and declared communications Nos. 29/2011 and 44/2012 inadmissible. At its fifty-seventh session, held in February 2014, the Committee adopted views finding violations in relation to communications Nos. 34/2011 and 36/2012, and declared communication No. 39/2012 inadmissible. It also discontinued its consideration of one communication concerning Ecuador. At its fifty-eighth session, held in June/July 2014, the Committee adopted views on communication No. 47/2012, finding a violation, and declared communication No. 30/2011 inadmissible. At its fifty-ninth session, held in October/November 2014, the Committee declared communications Nos. 37/2012, 49/2013 and 59/2013 inadmissible. At its sixtieth session, held in February/March 2015, the Committee adopted views finding a violation in relation to communication No. 48/2013, and declared communication No. 51/2013 inadmissible.

41. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Working Group on Communications continued to examine information, under its procedure on follow-up to views, in relation to 12 views concerning nine States parties: Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Spain and Turkey. During the same period, the Chair of the Working Group on Communications and other Committee members discussed follow-up matters with representatives of the Permanent Missions of Bulgaria, Brazil, Belarus, the Philippines and Turkey to the United Nations Office at Geneva, including measures taken by those States parties to give effect to the Committee's views on communications Nos. 20/2008, 31/2011 and 32/2011 (concerning Bulgaria), No. 17/2008 (concerning Brazil), No. 23/2009 (concerning Belarus), Nos. 18/2008 and 34/2011 (concerning the Philippines), and No. 28/2010 (concerning Turkey), respectively. At its fifty-eighth session, the Committee decided to suspend the follow-up dialogue finding a non-satisfactory implementation of the Committee's recommendations with regard to its views on communications No. 18/2008 concerning the Philippines and No. 23/2009 concerning Belarus.

42. During the reporting period, four submissions under article 8 of the Optional Protocol requesting inquiries were received by the Committee and registered by the secretariat pursuant to the rules of procedure of the Committee. There are currently two inquiries pending with the Committee. At its fifty-fifth and fifty-eighth sessions, the Committee adopted its findings and recommendations in relation to inquiries No. 2010/1 concerning the Philippines and No. 2011/1 concerning Canada, respectively, and in each case decided to transmit them to the State party concerned. At its fifty-ninth session, the Committee decided to make public and publish on the OHCHR website the full report of an inquiry setting out the Committee's findings, comments and recommendations upon completion of all proceedings related to the

conduct of the inquiry as well as the expiry of the time limit pursuant to article 8, paragraph 4, of the Optional Protocol (see A/70/38, part two, annex I). At its sixtieth session, the Committee decided to include a summary of inquiry No. 2010/1, including the Committee's findings and recommendations, in its annual report to the General Assembly, and concluded the proceedings in relation to inquiry 2011/1 (ibid., part three, paras. 26 and 27).[2]

IV. Efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

43. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women continue to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and promote acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which stipulates the meeting time allocated to the Committee. They have encouraged related action in their meetings with delegations, in statements and presentations at United Nations Headquarters, at other duty stations, and at conferences and other forums.

V. Technical assistance provided to States parties

44. Technical assistance and capacity-building activities of OHCHR routinely focus on the Convention, including with respect to the preparation of reports and follow-up to concluding observations, as well as the mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol. During the reporting period, UN-Women continued to organize training seminars on the Convention in a number of countries, which benefited from the contributions of experts of the Committee and involved not only Government officials but also other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations. Capacity-building is considered to be vital to assist States parties in the implementation of their treaty obligations. OHCHR will increase its activities in that regard, given that additional resources from the United Nations regular budget have been allocated to capacity-building for treaty reporting under General Assembly resolution 68/268.

VI. Dissemination of the Convention, its Optional Protocol and information on the work of the Committee

45. OHCHR has redesigned and improved the page on the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the work of the Committee on its website (www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx). The text of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, reports of States parties, lists of issues and questions, responses from States parties, States parties' introductory statements and the composition of delegations presenting reports, the Committee's concluding

[2] The summary of inquiry No. 2010/1 and the report of inquiry No. 2011/1 as well as the State party's observations thereon are issued as documents CEDAW/C/OP.8/PHL/1, CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/1 and CEDAW/C/OP.8/CAN/2, respectively.

observations and documents and any other information concerning the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the working methods of the Committee and the meetings of States parties are posted on the website. The Universal Human Rights Index, the electronic research tool maintained by OHCHR that indexes concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders, includes all lists of issues and concluding observations of the Committee.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

46. The Committee has made significant efforts to reduce the delay between the submission of reports and their consideration, using efficient working methods, including time management. Its efforts to encourage States parties to comply with their reporting obligations, especially where reports are long overdue, have been successful. It has enhanced its interaction with stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and has actively contributed to the common efforts of all treaty bodies to harmonize and strengthen the human rights treaty body system, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268, while adopting innovations appropriate to its work. The Committee has continued to develop its jurisprudence through its work under the Optional Protocol, including under the inquiry procedure, and its follow-up procedure in relation to views on individual communications finding violations has yielded positive, albeit modest, results. It has adopted three general recommendations, and three draft general recommendations are currently being prepared; one of them is nearing completion. The Committee organized two days of general discussion during the reporting period and has decided to elaborate additional general recommendations. A day of general discussion is being organized for one such general recommendation during the sixty-third session. The Committee has made its concluding observations more focused, country-specific and user-friendly. Follow-up to concluding observations has been mostly successful, although additional resources are required on the part of the Committee and the States concerned. Despite the Committee's achievements, further efforts are needed to encourage the implementation of the Convention at the national level.